2: Lorimer T-3 (1920-4; 1934-5) 1939 AV7 Burusho AV7

CCO boulder of rock-salt, filled two empty cigarette tins (very valuable these) with sugar, and then wondered how to get them surely conveyed to our friends of yesterday. For sugar and salt are indescribably precious, and an ordinary messenger might be tempted. I consulted Dádo. He fell on them with delight: "Oh, do let me take them. Mírbán is a clansman of mine, and a relation by marriage." That settled it, for you could trust Dádo with untold gold—or salt. An hour or two later he was back with radiant face and messages of thanks and blessing.

159 Our next experience with a house was when we found that our dear old neighbour, Ustád Nadíro, was planning one for the marriage of his son. The Ustád (master-craftsman) is a wonderful old man. He spent some years in Gilgit in his youth working in the "barrack-cháp" (= workshop) of the divisional engineer, and came back with a fine set of saws, planes, and chisels, so that he is one of the most famous of the carpenters and is frequently employed by the Mir to embellish his quarters in Báltít. He is, in fact, Carpenter to the King by royal letters patent. But he has not scorned to perfect himself also in the local crafts; he is a famous weaver and bootmaker as well. His wife, a sporting old lady of about my own age, with a game leg and toothless gums, indefatigable energy, a priceless sense of humour and an unfailing smile, is his worthy consort. We made friends with this delightful couple, who lived quite near on the water-channel above us, very early in our stay, and none of our neighbours were so thoughtful as they to call us to their house when anything interesting was going on. They had tragically lost their two elder sons, and the courage with which the two old folk carried on all the work which by now ought to have been shared by two sons and two daughters-in-law, awoke our constant admiration. One married daughter came over sometimes to lend a hand, but otherwise the pair at No. 8 had only Kamber, a lad of perhaps fourteen, and Hérul Nisa, a small girl of ten or so, to help them. With his varied crafts the Ustád must have accumulated some considerable wealth, and he had now betrothed his only surviving son to a girl a shade "above" them in rank,

157 belonging to a family in which Prince Ghazan Khán had been fostered, and who had thus acquired the extra land, etc., which is the recognized recompense for fostering royalty. We supposed that it was a desire to live up to this distinguished new connection (possibly it was a stipulation of the bride's people) that prompted his intention to set the young son, Kamber, up in a house of his own instead of bringing the new wife to share the parents' home.

342 Whatever lay behind this departure from custom, Nadíro sent his Hérul Nisa one day to tell me that he was setting out to "smite his poplars" if I would care to come. It was a *very* hot morning and I was deep in something else, but of course you'd never see anything if you weren't ready to take chances as they turn up. So I shouldered my camera and tripod, seized my long walking-stick (which is a great aid to climbing walls or leaping down them), on which I had made notches every foot to serve for measuring distances, and set off with Hérul Nisa. [423] "Where is father's poplar garden?" I asked. The Aliábád people have a bewildering way of possessing odd scraps of ground dotted about all over the place, just according as they have taken up one plot or another of the sometime royal land. "Oh, quite near," she said. Everything is "quite near" to these active people, who think less of a 500-foot climb than we think of running a hundred yards to the pillar-box at the corner. It was, in fact, a hot, vertical half-mile over the 342 roughest ground without even a track. Here on a rugged patch 313 of stony, steep-sloping ground, carefully walled in, I found the whole of No. 8 and several neighbours busily setting about the felling job. One man scrambled up and attached a rope near the top of the fated tree. Two or three laid hold of the rope and stood at some distance to pull in the right direction, while the old Ustád himself skilfully hacked a triangular bite out of the trunk near to the ground and then axed away. It was only a few minutes till the slender poplar crashed down. Then 314 Kamber and his friends hacked off the few remaining upper- 415 most branches—the lower ones had been cut long ago—and 313 the womenfolk and young people all clustered along the trunk to peel off the bark, taking care to get it off in strips as long

MARRIAGE IN HUNZA

561 888 Hurmat was telling me about his home affairs one day: "Our father and mother are fortunately still with us; they can't *do* very much nowadays, of course; but they are still able to give us orders, thank God." And he meant the "thank God." In the same way the uncanny skill of the old *rúli gus* in husbanding the year's supplies is fully appreciated, and her skill with wool and spindle still puts her daughters-in-law to shame.

888 ● 159 243] Old Aliko of No. 1A was past all serious work, though he kept up a plucky effort to preserve his youth by the constant dyeing of his fine white beard; but he was a renowned sower and could spread the seed more advantageously on the prepared field than younger men. There is no reckless wastage of precious seed-grain in Hunza; it is never flung where thorns could spring up and choke it, nor by the wayside to be trodden by the feet of men. And the neighbours would call Aliko in to sow for them. A real centenarian is a family treasure. Old Aliko's father was still living at the old homestead in Dorkhan with the other brothers (Aliko had hived off to Aliábád), and we made a special journey by request to see him and take his photograph. He was seated on a roof commanding a magnificent view of a steep hillside on which the farmstead straggled downhill in several storeys, as Hunza houses often do where the ground is steep. He had put on his best silk robe to receive us, and as we climbed the ladder and popped up over the roof brink, he apologized that he could not rise to greet us. Mentally he was as bright as ever and not even slightly deaf, and while David was busy with the portraiture I sat beside him and heard how he had lived through the reigns of four Mirs and four Maharajahs of Kashmir (the Mir, it should not be forgotten, had already reigned forty-five years); how proud he was that his son, Sangi Khan, was one of the headmen of Dorkhan, and how he had three sons and twelve grandsons still living at home (not to mention daughters and their children elsewhere). Before we reached the tale of his great-grandchildren, the photography and our visit were drawing to a close. He counted himself at least a hundred, and was certainly well on in the nineties, but still seemed full of the joy of life.

4: Durand G-3 (1888-93) 1900 AV1 Kashmir
Burusho AV 7

three doors are placed in the right angle turn of a very narrow passage which only one man can use at a time, and the doorways are so low that a tall man has to bend almost double to pass through them. The object is to prevent a rush, and to make it impossible for a man to use his weapons as he passes through the last doorway. Similarly the ascent to the flat-topped roof of a man's house is jealously guarded, and he who considers himself in any danger never sleeps twice in the same part of his room, for the skylight gives an enemy a convenient point of vantage from which to shoot.

We found the Thum in a typical square room, with an open skylight, and a sunk hearth in the floor, seated by a balconied window, from which there was an extensive view over his country. His beard was carefully dyed, and it was difficult to guess his age, but he was not an old man; drink and debauchery had reduced him to his present state, and paralysed him from the waist down. We did not stop long, as the visit was merely one of ceremony, and the audience room was full of people, before whom business could not be discussed. Our uniforms were a source of much interest to our hosts, and of considerable discomfort to ourselves. Frock coats and spiked helmets, high boots and spurs, sword and sabretache, are not quite the thing for the grand staircases of the country. Later in the day Uzr Khan paid me a visit, and we had to sit through an interminable dance programme, which, as the orchestra consisted of six pairs of kettle-drums, six large drums beaten at both ends, and three pipes, was simply deafening. The dances were all very much the same—six or eight men

4a Durand G-3 (1888-93) 1900 AV1 Kashmir
Durusho AV7

312 four and a half feet wide by one foot deep, which means a considerable flow of water. On this channel the cultivation of Hunza proper entirely depends; should it fail, starvation stares the people in the face. It is not surprising, therefore, that the greatest care should be expended on its preservation. But what is wonderful is the excellence of the result arrived at. It must be remembered that the people have no proper tools, no crowbars and dynamite to assist them. A tiny pick of soft iron, which looks like a child's garden tool, shovels fashioned out of wood, and a few poles as levers, are all that they have to work with. The use of mortar is unknown; all their walls are of dry masonry. Yet with all these disadvantages, with nothing but their eye as a guide to levels, they have carried this great irrigation channel for six miles, and turned an arid desert into a garden. For the most part it is true it runs along the side of a gently sloping mountain, but it also crosses many deep and perpendicular-sided ravines, and encounters masses of rock which have to be circumvented. It is a splendid work, and I admired it more every time I walked along it.

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159 The Thum was too unwell with fever to return my visit, and his Wazir came in his stead. Robertson went up to see the Chief, and prescribed for him, with the result that the descendant of Alexander, as he considered and called himself, got into a state of abject terror, thought his last hour was come, and refused to take the second dose which was the natural sequence of the first. Robertson reported that he was a coward, that he had literally

4: Durand G-3 (1888-93) 1900 AV1 Kashmir
Burushe AV7
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funked himself into a state of great nervousness and a sort of nettle-rash five minutes after he had taken his first dose, which should not have taken effect for an hour. This sounded bad, for a rank coward is a dangerous man to deal with.

The views from our little camp by the polo ground were superb, especially in the afternoons; the great sugar-loaf peak of Dirran, just opposite, seemed to float and melt in the pale blue sky, and Rakapushi was glorious, with great dashes of sunlight at his base, and bands of clouds resting high up, the great peaks standing out above.

And now came the important interviews at which business had to be discussed. The first one was quite satisfactory. I found the Thum in a small open room or court leading into the private apartments, and we sat down to discuss business. It was obvious that the Wazir was the important man, but also that the Thum, cowardly, shifty, and with a ridiculous idea of his own importance, must be reckoned with very carefully. Everything passed off well, and the Government conditions were readily assented to, the most important one at the moment being the promise of a free passage to Younghusband, who was to come to Gilgit in November from the Pamirs. Wazir Dadu amused us very much when the question of raiding was raised. He made no attempt at denying that this was the custom of the country, and explained it by saying that Hunza was a poor state, and that necessarily its people looted. The evident enjoyment with which he referred to former exploits, and the expressive grin which accompanied his explanations,

4: Durand G-3 (1888-93) 1900 AVI Kashmir
Burushe AV7

were too much for me, and I had to join in the general laugh.

We parted good friends, but in the evening came a letter from the Thum, asking for the same subsidy for his son as had been promised to Raja Uzr Khan of Nagar. As his son was about four years old and Uzr Khan thirty, I thought this was pretty cool. In the morning came rather an insolent verbal message to the effect that unless the boy's subsidy was granted, my surveyor would not be allowed to proceed to the north, where there was some surveying work to be done. This was in direct contravention of the agreement entered into, but I took no notice, as we were to pay our farewell visits that day. After breakfast, accordingly, we went up and had a long talk, which was quite satisfactory until the question of the boy's subsidy came up. It was useless to point out that Raja Uzr Khan's grant was taken out of his father's, that he was a grown man, with much weight in the country, and that the case of the small boy would doubtless be considered when he came of age, if his father was loyal to his engagements. The Thum got sulkier and sulkier, ruder and ruder, until the Wazir, who was evidently uneasy at the turn things were taking, brought the discussion to a close with smooth and tactful words. We returned to camp fairly well satisfied, to find that we had been meant to march that day, but that with their usual fecklessness the Thum's people had not let us know. It would have saved me hours of anxiety had I but known this the day before.

After sending off the presents I had brought for

4: Durand G-3 (1888-93) 1900 AVI Kashmir
Gurais. AVI

the Thum by the Raja of Astor and my head orderly, Zyarulla Khan, I sat down and began to write an official letter to India, giving the story of the progress of the negotiations. I had been writing some time, when I saw my orderly strolling towards the tent with a rifle in his hands. I caught his eye, and saw that something was wrong, and that he wanted to see me alone. I therefore dismissed my servant, who was wandering about the tent making preparations for the next day's march, and called Zyarulla in. I never shall forget his coolness that day; he was a well-tried Pathan, for whom danger brought no fears. Looking round to see that no one was within hearing, he walked to the door of my tent, and, laying the rifle on my table, quietly remarked: "Rifle bigr gya, aur Raja bhi bigr gya"—"the rifle has gone wrong, and so has the Raja." Picking up the rifle, a repeater, I set to work to put it right, and listened to the story of his interview with our truculent host. It did not sound pleasant. My envoys had found the Thum sulky about his son's pension, and, after some talk, during which the presents were duly spread before him, he had suddenly flown into a passion, thrown my things about the room, and refused to accept them. He had called for and shown a quantity of presents received from the Russians, and offered to produce the treaty he had made with them, even to show it to me, and generally had behaved like a disappointed and spoilt child. Finally, he had sent me a message that he withdrew all the promises that he had made.

The question I had to solve, and to solve pretty quickly, was whether this was a serious outbreak, or

4: Durand G-3 (1888-93) 1900 AV1 Kashmir
Burusho AV7

a *volte-face* on the part of the Chief, who was probably now cursing those who had counselled him to violence, and in whose fickle and unstable mind the advantages of being well with us were now in the ascendant. My reply to his letter was very much to the point, and the result was a complete climb-down on the part of the Thum, abject apologies and profuse protestations of loyalty to the engagements lately taken. I attached the proper value to his vows, but left the country feeling that, at all events for that year, there would be no further trouble, and that Younghusband's safe passage was assured.

We all liked what we saw of the Hunza people; they were cheery and pleasant and civil as we passed through their villages. The leaders were scoundrels. Dadu and his son had fired the first shots at the old Thum, while the contemptible young parricide who succeeded cowered in a room below them. The moment the old man was dead Safdar Ali entered the fort, seized the wife of one of his father's chief adherents, and murdered his three younger brothers. Two were strangled and cut to pieces, the third was taken to the edge of the cliff, on which the fort stands, and hurled over. He was a mere boy, and only asked that he might be thrown into the water, not on to the rocks; his prayers were unheeded. Safdar Ali's description of the circumstances attending his accession was contained in a letter to Government which ran somewhat as follows: "By the will of God my father and I fell out; he died suddenly, and I have ascended the throne." The old Thum, with all his villainy, had been a man, and I found traces, even during my short visit to Hunza, of deep discontent